

## TASTES OF ROYAL READERS.

## MANY LITERARY RULERS AND SOME LEARNED ONES.

Change of a Century in This Respect—King Edward No Great Reader—Kaiser's Variety of Knowledge—Learning of the Khedive—Intellectual Princesses.

In the good old days Kings and Queens were not expected, necessarily, to know anything about literature. It was one of the prerogatives of royalty to be ignorant. The last century has changed all that.

A King now has to be a walking encyclopedia. A Queen wins admiration from her people when it is known that she loves books and has a cultivated taste. Young Princesses have to wade through languages, science and political economy. Small Princesses are expected to have an acquaintance with poets and the better sort of novels.

The change has come about within our own times. In nearly every case the younger sovereigns and royalties generally are highly cultivated and fond of learning and literature.

Tako the English royal family for an example. The late Queen Victoria was undoubtedly a woman of great brain power and character, she probably knew as much about the ruling of her immense possessions as any of her Ministers, and sometimes ran very close to violating the unwritten English Constitution by putting direct personal restraint upon the responsible heads of State departments. Yet her literary taste was peculiar.

She read a good deal of Tennyson, no doubt, but it was mainly because of a certain sentimentalism in which her Poet Laureate met her own womanly feeling. Her taste was not, however, entirely removed. Her almost exclusive devotion to publication by a titled secretary—show that she had no sound literary judgment. And her later reading was either in books of devotion and sermons, or in novels of the least intellectual order.

Her indirectly expressed approval of a book several times set up sales, as in the case of "Rita," but it is not to be taken for granted that she read all that she read. The old Queen read simply to while away the heavy hours. She belonged, able woman though she was, to the age of uncultivated royal persons.

Her son, the present King, belongs practically to the same period. He is not in the case of his youth and he, too, is not a great reader. He is, however, a man of letters. Much less able than his mother, he is practically an uneducated man, except in the sense that he is a man of the world and knows life very thoroughly in all its phases.

It is nowhere recorded that he ever expressed an opinion of a book, but he has read very few. Certainly his attempts at speech making show him to be completely out of touch with the world of thought. He has, however, a certain medieval monarch who paid learned men to write for him while he himself remained ignorant of the contents of the books he was reading.

On the other hand, the present King is a man of letters. He is not a great reader, but he is far ahead of his mother in his interest in letters and in his knowledge of the world.

His press bureau, by the way, is possibly the best equipped in the world. A number of staff of readers wades through German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Oriental papers every day to clip for him editorial matter and articles on literature and science which may interest him. As a sort of secret service, he is dealing with the press, especially with the press of the United States.

The Kaiser does some boxing himself in his private life. He is a student, almost a scholar, in the history of the United States. He is a student, almost a scholar, in the history of the United States. He is a student, almost a scholar, in the history of the United States.

Queen Margherita is equally indifferent to literature. She cares for nothing but the simple little stories of children's books.

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